

New Stories of THE MYSTERIOUS WAYS OF

IX.—The Buddha's Wand.

"THERE'S off again, and a fine lot this time," said Mrs. Cortelyou, wife of the American Consul at Shanghai, to her friend and guest, Mrs. Marsdale of Boston, as they sat in the "Consulate Row" on the grandstand at the race-course. "I do hope my husband's pony will win something this time, for he takes such a pride in the few American firms being able to hold their own with the English, you know."

"Yes, indeed," answered Mrs. Marsdale. "I am sure he is most loyal to his country in everything. He enters into all the sports so enthusiastically—I wish our American consuls did the same—and he is always 'on top,' as they say, with the stars and stripes. By the way, which firm is it that he is interested in now?"

"Why, Farnsworth & Co. don't you know, blue and white, the colors we are wearing now—"

"We?"

"Why, certainly, my dear; didn't you see that ribbon on you before we left the house?"

"I am afraid the good man forgot it!" "Thoughtless creature! Just like him—the truth is he would have walked out without his helmet in all this brilliant sun if I hadn't looked after him. You must forgive him, for I know he had the colors laid out for you on his office desk. Here! You just take mine—"

Unpinning a handsome badge of blue and white ribbons from her dress and fastening it on her friend.

"Nonsense, my dear child," protested Mrs. Marsdale. "The idea of the Consul's wife being seen at the races without her colors! What will people think of you?" But Mrs. Cortelyou insisted on making good her husband's forgetfulness, and there was nothing to do but to yield.

"And what do the words 'Foe Sang' mean?" inquired the former as she noticed the gold stamp on the ribbons. "Some wonderful and mysterious Chinese charm, I suppose; the Orient is all so quaint and interesting."

"Oh, no, that's only the Hong's (firm's) Chinese name. The native's can't pronounce 'Farnsworth' or any of our foreign signs, so they just select some happy and high-sounding phrase and translate all their business with us through that; it saves so much time and trouble. I believe it means 'Fortunate Life,' or something of that kind."

"What a happy ideal!" "Yes, or 'How appropriately felicitous,' as they would say in old Boston, wouldn't they?"

"Well, I suppose Beacon Street would be inclined to express it that way, perhaps," answered Mrs. Marsdale with a smile of loyalty for her New England home.

"Watch them! Watch them through your glasses, dear. See! They're at the quarter-post already—no, it's the half, and the blue and white is leading!"

All eyes were now turned in the direction of the flying ponies and their brave riders as they rounded the further side of the course. The whole grandstand seemed to swing around the circle with them. What a picturesque sight it was, and where in the world could one witness such a gathering of varied people, faces and costumes! European ladies with all the newest creations from Paris, London, Vienna and Madrid; in the rows of seats behind them brilliant colored robes from Calcutta, Bombay and Batavia, worn by the wives and daughters of these fortunate Orientals who from their prominent position in the community were able to claim a quasi-equality with the Western world; and in the adjoining "boxes" all the hues of the rainbow reflected from the robes of the Chinese patrons of the white man's sport. Suddenly a sharp cry of excitement rang out. "Foe Sang has fallen! The blue and white is down!"

As between the half and the three-quarter mile posts they saw the handsome gray Montolian pony, whose jockey wore the popular colors of Farnsworth & Co., stagger for a moment and then fall with his rider, a complete mess upon the turf. There was a rush of policemen, surgeons, officials of the course and citizens toward the spot where the accident occurred, the pony—just breathing his last—was hastily dragged to one side, and the jockey, stunned but fortunately not seriously injured, was carried to the nearest shelter and given due medical treatment.

The incident was soon forgotten by the assembled crowd, and ere long the bell sounded for the second race and everything went on merrily as before. The third and fourth passed off successfully without any accident to horses or riders, and after a short interval for the inevitable afternoon tea preparations began to be made for the fifth. In this one the Americans were again especially interested for the first and fifth were the only ones

in which the firm of the Farnsworths had entered their ponies.

"And who is riding for you this time?" inquired Mrs. Marsdale as she saw the Consul and his friends leading out the new batch of ponies and the blue and white prominently among them.

"Why, it is Mr. Pierce, the brother of the first jockey, and they say, equally as good a rider. They call them 'The Eurasian Twins' because they are almost exactly alike—not even the Chinese can tell them apart. They are fine fellows, both of them; sons of old Captain Pierce, who was in the coast service here for years. They've been riding for Mr. Farnsworth ever since we have been here, and they have the reputation of being absolutely honest."

"That's what I like," answered Mrs. Cortelyou with a questioning smile. "Absolutely honest for jockeys, and my husband trusts them implicitly."

"And how is the other poor fellow who was thrown?" "It's a wonder to me he wasn't killed upon the spot."

"Oh, he's doing splendidly. The doctor says he'll be all right in a day or two. Fortunately, you see, he fell quite clear of the pony and just rolled over and over on the soft grass there."

The conversation of the ladies was interrupted just here by the sounding of the second bell, and in a few minutes more the shouts of the assembled thousands of names announced that the ponies and their riders were off again around the course. Now came the strange and startling thing: at almost the identical spot beyond the half-mile post where the weaver of the blue and white was thrown in the first race of the afternoon his twin brother's pony suddenly reared and came within an ace of repeating the accident. His jockey, however, clung with a veritable death grip to his mane and neck, and when the animal leaped into the air and then fell upon his knees he turned a complete somersault over his head and landed, like the trained acrobat in a circus, safe and sound upon his feet!

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed the Consul, who had only just joined the ladies. "They're trying to kill another one. That's the second fall today and—"

He was suddenly interrupted by the sound of the Chinese, who began running in every direction, repeating the cry, "Ma tao lao jen! Ma tao lao jen!" and it required all the efforts of the English police and the native victors with their long bamboo poles to restore order and quiet. "Shen mo mat Shen mo mat!" they kept inquiring. "Who's horse? Whose horse?"

At first nobody seemed able to definitely answer the question, but as the minutes passed came running back from the other side of the course, crying out: "Ching pak ching pak. Hwo chi kwo hong Foe Sang!"

"Blue and white, blue and white! The Flower Flag (American) Kingdom's firm Foe Sang, Foe Sang!" This was the signal for a great sympathetic outcry of "Ko Shi! Ko Shi!" ("How sad! How sad!") from the multitude. The Farnsworth firm was easily the most popular with the natives of all those represented on the course that afternoon.

Standing by the side of His Excellency, the Tao Tai, was a tall Chinese gentleman, who appeared to be acting for the moment as interpreter between this dignitary of the government and the newly arrived Consul for France, Colonel Francois DePuy Vaillette. He was not in uniform, but one could see at once from his attitude and bearing and from the deference paid him by the Consul and the Tao Tai, that he was far more than an ordinary interpreter. It was also quite evident that he had more than a mere passing acquaintance with the two officers from East and West for whom he was acting as the go-between.

"A most extraordinary circumstance—most extraordinary!" remarked the Consul, "that the two riders of the same firm should be thrown in the same afternoon."

"Trickery of which you speak is not unknown in our Southern Colony," He had hardly uttered these words when a stout individual, clad in robes of the most elegant and expensive silk and wearing the large horn goggles of the well-to-do merchant class, pushed his way by them and motioned to some waiting coolies to make ready his sedan. He was muttering to himself as he passed—evidently in a state of considerable irritation and anger. "Tien Ming puh puh! Tien Ming puh puh! Tai tak Foe Sang!" ("It is not the Decree of Heaven, it is not the Decree of Heaven, it is not the Decree of Heaven!" These remarks were lost upon both Colonel Vaillette and the Tao Tai, the former did not understand them and the latter evidently did not distinctly hear them, but the trained and ever-careful ear of the man who stood between them caught them and did not forget them, and so, when he reached his quiet lodging that evening, he found a place in one of the leaves of his note-book, where they were securely hidden away for any possible future reference.

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notice in the leading Chinese papers. They were practically the same in the substance and purport, though of course elaborately drawn out and clothed in all the flowery expressions of the native editor. Not a word in any of them, however, though he read every column through slowly and carefully, that would point to anyone, foreigner or native, as the actual guilty party, which fact seemed rather to disappoint him. The more he thought upon the case, the more interesting—because the more involved—it became to him, and so taking out his little travelling writing-case he sat down and, rubbing the ink-blot up and down the stone tablet, after the manner of the true Chinese scholar, he repeated over as he did so, the well-known words of Confucius, "As we polish and then grind!" and dipping his brush in the ink-carbon fluid he began a little letter to his home in Hong Kong, which conveyed to them the news that it might be the middle of the moon or more before he would set sail for the Island of Fragrant Waters.

He had a real and genuine problem before him in unravelling a case of which he had had the unusual advantage of himself being an eye-witness. This was more than worth to him the extra trouble and expense of a stay in Shanghai and he immediately set his thinking faculties to work, determined to work out at least some plausible theory before he should confer with his old friend, Inspector Gubbins of the police.

Four distinct questions naturally outlined themselves before him: First, was it an accident or a premeditated

crime? Second, if a crime, was it poison or some other form of death?

Third, who was the guilty party? Fourth, what was his object in committing it, financial profit or merely the gratifying of some deadly hatred and revenge? As incidental to all this, he would of course take a de-light in securing the identity of the mysterious personage in the silks and goggles, whom he had overheard rejecting the theory of the "Decree of Heaven" as he rushed past him by the Tao Tai's side. "Yes," he said to himself as he slipped on his evening tea in the upper room at the home of his old friend, the basket-maker, "yes, I have certainly a few days of very attractive work before me, and I had best begin, as the Sages taught, by bending my attention to what is radical, 'Kwun Tze woo pen'." ("The Superior Man observes the root") and so saying he blew out the little lantern and fell asleep on his bamboo pillow.

While the Man of Mystery, as Wang Foe had come to be known by his European friends, was thus occupied, quietly working out his own theory unknown to the outer world of Shanghai, Inspector Gubbins and Chief Detective Brownlow had not been idle in their efforts to clear the race course and fasten the poisoning—for such Dr. Aubrey, the veterinary, had unhesitatingly declared the crime to be—upon the head of some native or possibly European rascal. Among other suggestions, amid the many that had come to them from members of the Race Club and other interested residents, was one that was brought to them in confidence by an old racing hand from abroad and which appealed to them by its very ingenuity. Major Weltman, of Sidney, described to them which jockey was bribed to mortally injure a pony in an Australian race. A subtle and quickly acting poison was concealed in one of his stirrups, the stir-

rup of which, instead of revolving as usual was soldered firmly to the shank. In it was concealed a hollow needle connected with a metal tube, so that when it was plunged into the horse's side the rider's blood, the poison was injected into his veins and soon did its deadly work. The whole thing was afterward exposed in the Sidney papers and the stirrups and needles are now on exhibition in the cabinet of the chief of police there.

"It would be a magnificent theory for us to go on, sir," remarked the thoughtful Brownlow to his superior officer, after listening to the Major's story, "but for one fatal defect—"

"And pray, what might that be?" interrupted the Australian visitor.

"Why, simply this," answered the detective. "I find, on careful inquiry, that at the last meeting of the Race Club Committee, steel spurs were ordered, and nothing but these little 'bamboo ticklers,' as the Chinese call them, were allowed to be worn this season."

"I am afraid the spur theory won't work this time, Major," added the Inspector with a smile, "however successful it may have been in Sidney."

"Yes, I'm afraid not," replied the Major, as he rose to leave. "You chaps will have to find some other form of devilish ingenuity for that's what it is and that's what I call it, devilish, nothing less. I'm an old racing man myself, and I tell you the man who will deliberately plan to use a spur and kill him—well, hanging's too good for him, that's my opinion, gentlemen. Good morning!"

As the days passed on, public opinion began, pretty generally, to clear the Pierce brothers of any complicity in the case and the firm of Farnsworth & Co. indeed completely exonerated them. There was not a particle of real substantial evidence against them and nobody could even suggest any motive

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ment. I wonder what he's doing here?" "Oh, he said he was just back from a little trip to Peking, where he'd been doing some government work, I believe. I laughingly asked him if he ever investigated veterinary cases as well as human ones; for I was going to suggest that he might help you out with the Foe Sang case, you know, and he said, quite significantly, that he once studied up a case of villainy in the Hong Kong racing stables! I was just a-going to add that we had a good one here all ready for him when he—but see, sure as you live, here comes the very man now!" Mutual greetings were of course in order and Wang Foe promised the Inspector that he would call for a friendly chat and smoke at headquarters that afternoon. He suited the action to the word, and upon admitting to Mr. Gubbins that he had been doing a little studying of the poison case on his own account, he drew from his sleeve the well-worn little leather note-book and, with closed covers and windows, confided a considerable portion of its contents to him.

"You don't mean to say that you actually believe them to have it?"

"I believe them, answered Wang Foe. "I know them to be the ones, and I am now only just waiting to satisfy my mind about one little extra bit of evidence, before I hand the whole thing over to you and Captain Brownlow. In the meantime, I think we can be mutually helpful, if you will look up carefully, for your own satisfaction as well as for the present case, any and all daily doings of the personage I mentioned and then—"

"He added—in a tone of great satisfaction, 'as my old friend, the American Consul at Hong Kong used to say, 'By the great Harn Spoon! We've 'collected 'em this time, sure!'"

Just who the mysterious parties were to whom our friend the great detective was referring will appear in a very short time. In the meanwhile let us accompany him to the famous tea-house of the Golden Pheasant, where, in the innocent garb of a native attendant, he was waiting, and not in vain, for the appearance of Hung Tak Fong, the comrade of Jones and Mullins, the shippers. The latter soon arrived with a party of friends, and it was only a very few minutes before Wang was able, by the skillful use of a system of words and exclamations known only to the Chinese mind—to turn the whole flow of conversation to the subject of the races and the supposed poisoning of the two Farnsworth brothers. He listened with all attention that he possessed, carefully passing the trays and tea-bowls over to another servant (who had been paid in advance to stand close by and receive them) and allowing himself to get more than two or three feet away from the table and from the person of the afore-said Hung Tak Fong, whom he had easily identified as our old friend with the goggles and silks.

The latter soon felt quite unimpeded, and, into the trap which the detective had laid for him, and repeated again and again the very words, "Pei tak Foe Sang, pei tak Foe Sang," which he had used that day at the race course and which seemed on their face to mean, "He was discharged from Foe Sang. He was discharged from Foe Sang."

"Why did Wang Foe start and look so intently at Hung's companion from Foe Chow? Why did he listen so carefully to the latter's comment on this remark? Why, simply because he quoted the old legend of the 'Wand of the Buddha' and added most significantly, 'The gods must indeed have been very angry that day to have struck twice in the self-same place.'"

A slight change of accent had revealed the double meaning in the words and Wang Foe realized that what he had understood to mean, "He was discharged from Foe Sang" was really, "He was beaten with the Buddha's wand!" And so one of his very first theories—and one still firmly clinging to by the native and foreign alike—namely that the poisoner was a discharged employee of the Farnsworths vanished away like the rising aroma from the smoking tea!

A few hours later the again sought the ear of the Inspector. "Have you ascertained beyond a doubt, sir," he asked, "just who approached the ponies and touched them or patted them as they were being led out?"

"She was the one, Mr. Wang," he answered, and he allowed her that privilege only because she was a lady, sir; you see, their rules are very strict, just to prevent tampering with them in any way. They even watch them carefully all day and all night before they race them."

"You said 'she' did you not? You're quite sure of this?"

"Absolutely positive, sir."

"Then we are all ready for the exposure in the morning—but stop! We had better have a private interview with Mr. Farnsworth first, had we not?"

"Why, yes, certainly, sir. I know he may wish for personal reasons to hush it up and keep the whole thing quiet."

"Right you are," answered the chief. "I will write him a note at once and we will have him here this very evening."

The above conversation explains the brief notice in the Daily News of the following morning to the effect that "We are authorized by the Inspector of Police to state that the Messrs. Pierce, jockeys for the firm of Farnsworth & Co., are now proven to have been tampered with by the suspicion of having tampered with the latter's ponies at the late Spring races and so also are the Chinese m-f-foos, whom we are very glad to clear of the charge. It has been discovered that the poisoning was the malicious work of a foreign visitor, who, we are glad to say, has left for Europe by a recent mail and so covers the crime with a most unpleasant incident in our midst."

"You don't tell me he is actually in town; he generally drops a card in on me when he passes through the Set-

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